Keppinautur 2026 Rulebook (DRAFT)

Reykjavík HEMA Club

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This document describes the tournament organization and ruleset for Keppinautur 2026. All participants should familiarize themselves with its contents, and any questions may be directed to ⟨*info@rvkhema.is*⟩ or the relevant tournament director.

There will be three separate competitions: Longsword, Sidesword, and Saber. Section 1 describes the base ruleset used by all divisions, and section 2 describes alterations to this ruleset specific to each particular division.

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1 General Rules

1.1 Competition Structure

Each competition takes place in two rounds: A set of qualifying pools followed by an elimination bracket.

1.1.1 Qualifying Pools

Fencers must arrive on time and properly equipped (§1.2) when their pool is called. Failure to be on time may result in the fencer being withdrawn from the competition. It is strongly recommended that fencers show up early, as **the pool will start as soon as all fencers are present**.

Equipment inspection will take place at the start of the pool's scheduled time. If a fencer's equipment fails inspection, they will be granted 15 minutes to correct the problem before being disqualified.

During the pool, every fencer will fight one match with each other fencer within their pool.

1.1.2 Eliminators

The elimination bracket is a single-elimination tournament which continues until there are only two fencers remaining. The fencers will be seeded based on their win/loss ratio during the pools[1]. The top fencer from each pool will advance to the elimination bracket, and the remaining places in the bracket are wildcard slots that will be filled by the fencers with the highest ranking regardless of which pool they fought in.

1.1.3 Finals

There will be two finals competitions: The two undefeated fencers will compete for the gold and silver medals, and the last two fencers eliminated from the bracket will compete for the bronze medal.

Each of these competitions will be a 3-match series with a 60 second break between matches[2]; the final match will be fought only if the overall winner is still in doubt.

[1] If necessary, ties will be broken based on fencers' net points earned within matches.
[2] If time is short, the competition for bronze might be reduced to a single match.

1.2 Equipment Requirements

HEMA is a dangerous sport, and no armor can prevent all injuries. Each fencer is ultimately responsible for the quality and condition of their own equipment and participates at their own risk. All fencers are encouraged to use protection that exceeds the minimums required for participation.

All equipment must be in good condition without obvious damage.

The requirements listed here aim to be comprehensive but the wide variety of HEMA equipment on the market makes this impossible. As such, the tournament director may reject any equipment from the competition on safety or fairness grounds, even if it conforms to all guidelines listed in this document.

1.2.1 Armor

Fencers must be completely covered, with no exposed skin.

Fencers must wear a mask bearing a Level 2 EN13567 certification mark. The mask must be fitted with a back-of-head protector.

The fencer's entire body above the knees must be covered by material with a pierce resistance rating of 350N or higher.

The fencer's neck, elbows, forearms, knees, and shins must be protected by rigid armor pieces. Rigid personal protection is also required for all fencers.

Exposed metal armor pieces, other than the mask, are forbidden.

Gloves and closed-toe shoes are required. Gloves must be constructed of sturdy material, such as heavy leather or rigid plastic, and be long enough to protect the wrist.

1.2.2 Swords

Sword points must be either rolled or spatulated.

The sword blade must buckle under a point load, as from a thrust, and have no visible deformation after the load is removed.

Sword edges must be blunt and free of any sharp burrs.

1.3 Match Procedures

Each match consists of two fencers attempting to be the first to obtain twelve points within a time limit of three minutes.

1.3.1 Officials

Fencers must obey all instructions of any match officials, which includes the referee, judges, and table.

In the event that these instructions conflict, the referee's instructions take precedence over others.

1.3.2 Verbal Calls

The primary form of communication on the field is a series of verbal calls.

During an exchange:

- Each exchange begins when the referee calls "FENCE" and ends when the referee calls "BREAK", at which point the scores for the exchange are tallied.
- Any person present shall call "HOLD" upon noticing a safety issue; this voids the exchange without points being awarded.
- Judges shall call "POINT" when they observe a scoring action to request that the referee calls "BREAK".
- Table may call "POINT" when they observe a non-sword scoring action, such as a ring-out; table must not opine on any sword action unless asked by the referee.

Between exchanges:

- The final score for each exchange is announced by the referee and confirmed by the table.
- When one fencer reaches the point cap, the table will call "CAP, MATCH (color)"
- If time expires before the point cap is reached, the table will call "LAST EXCHANGE". After the next exchange, table will call "TIME, MATCH (color)".

These calls may only be made by the people indicated. Any other person making such a call may be sanctioned (§1.3.7).

1.3.3 Scoring an Exchange

Each judge has two judging sticks, one for each fencer, that they use to signal scores after each exchange:

- Upwards, above the head, indicates the fencer scored a *major strike* (3 points).

- Horizontally with arm outstretched to the side indicates the fencer scored a *minor strike* (2 points).
- Horizontally with arm outstretched in front indicates the fencer performed a scoring *ancillary action* (1 point)
- Horizontally across the eyes indicates that the judge did not have the vantage point to make a decision.
- Downwards and waving at the floor indicates that the fencer's action had insufficient quality.
- Downwards and unmoving indicates that no scorable action took place.

In all cases, the judges' scores are advisory and the referee makes the final decision.

1.3.4 Fencers

Each fencer will be issued a colored armband, which must be worn throughout the match. At the beginning of the match, fencers should wait at the marked location for their color. The referee will verify that all officials and both fencers are ready, request the fencers salute each other, and then start the first exchange.

When the referee calls for the start of an exchange, the fencers are then free to enter the field and engage. If "HOLD" is called, both fencers must stop fencing immediately and wait in place for the referee's instructions. If "BREAK" is called, both fencers must stop fencing immediately and return to their respective starting points to await the next exchange. At the end of the match, the fencers must not depart until given leave by the referee.

1.3.5 Seconds

Each fencer may designate *one* person as their second. Seconds may accompany the fencer to the side of the field and interact with the match officials on the fencer's behalf. Seconds may enter the field between exchanges to aid the fencer, but *must* remain outside the field during an exchange.

1.3.6 Disputes

Either fencer or their second may appeal the referee's interpretation of the rules, but the referee's determination of the events of the exchange are final. If a fencer believes that a judge's or the referee's judgment is impaired due to fatigue or a conflict of interest, they or their second may appeal to have the official replaced.

All appeals first go to the referee for consideration and, if no settlement is reached, shall be escalated to the tournament director, whose decision is final. Any appeal must be lodged before either starting the next exchange or departing the field; continuing to fence constitutes acceptance of any judgment made. The available remedies for a successful appeal are limited to altering the score of the most recent exchange, issuing or rescinding warnings to fencers, replacing match officials, and ejecting disruptive individuals from the vicinity of the match.

1.3.7 Disruption

Any individual who disrupts an ongoing match may be sanctioned at the discretion of the referee:

- If they are a spectator, the referee may eject them from the vicinity of the match.
- If they are affiliated with one of the fencers, the referee may issue a warning to that fencer.

Examples of such disruption are:

- Making unauthorized verbal calls
- Inhibiting communication between the match participants (referee, judges, fencers, and/or table)
- Insulting or derogatory statements or gestures directed at one or more of the match participants

1.4 Scoring

Scorable actions fall into three different point categories, *major strikes* (3 points), *minor strikes* (2 points), and *ancillary actions* (1 point).

At the referee's discretion, thrusts to the hand may be scored as if they struck a target that the hand was covering.

The particular actions that fall into each category vary based on the weapon system in use; refer the weapon-specific rules for details (§2.1.2, §2.2.2, §**??**).

1.4.1 Afterblows

Each fencer's actions are scored separately, including in-tempo afterblows; **only the first scoring action** of each fencer is considered. In the event that a fencer performs multiple scoring actions simultaneously, the highest-value action is considered. The higher-scoring fencer is then awarded the difference in scores for the exchange.

An afterblow is considered to be in-tempo if the strike was already in motion at the moment the primary action makes contact.

1.4.2 Unclear Exchanges

If the referee, with the aid of the judges, cannot determine what happened during an exchange, it is generally worth no points to either fencer. However, if one fencer maintained a clear advantage throughout the exchange, the referee *may* award that fencer one point for dominance.

1.4.3 Indicated Strikes

The referee *may* award points for unsafe sword strikes (§1.5.1) that are indicated in a controlled manner without contact.

1.4.4 Unarmed Strikes

Intentional unarmed strikes are forbidden, and are cause for warnings for unsafe fencing (§1.5.1) and/or tournament interference (§1.5.3). Incidental unarmed strikes that occur while attempting a legal action, such as a parry or grapple, are not a scoring action and the exchange will continue.

1.4.5 Out of Bounds

The bounds of the field shall be clearly marked. Throughout the exchange, fencers must maintain contact with the in-bounds region of the field. Failing to do so with at least one foot will result in a point for their opponent (ring-out). Any strikes in motion at the time of the ring-out are scored as in-tempo afterblows (§1.4.1).

1.4.6 Disarms

If a fencer loses control of their weapon or parrying/blocking device for any reason, their opponent is awarded one point.

1.4.7 Grappling

When a fencer attempts to control their opponent through prolonged body contact, this constitutes a grappling attempt and the following rules apply.

If a fencer contacts the ground with any part of their body other than a foot or is lifted out of contact with the ground, their opponent is awarded one point for a successful grapple. Knowingly continuing a grappling attempt beyond this point (e.g. by actually throwing their opponent) is cause for a warning for unsafe fencing (§1.5.1).

If a fencer successfully disengages from their opponent's grappling attempt, they are awarded a point.

1.5 Warnings

The primary mechanism for punishing undesirable behavior within a match is by the referee issuing warnings. If a fencer is issued a warning, all scoring actions for that fencer are void during the exchange.

Additionally, multiple warnings within a match carry escalating penalties: A fencer's first warning results in a verbal caution. A second warning awards their opponent three points. A third warning results in an automatic forfeit of the match. For the purposes of this scale, warnings issued outside of a match are counted towards the fencer's next match.

If a fencer forfeits multiple matches due to warnings, the tournament director *may* disqualify them from further participation in Keppinautur.

The remainder of this section describes the behaviors that may result in warnings.

1.5.1 Unsafe Fencing

A warning may be issued for any action that places any person at undue risk of injury. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Striking the spine, knee, or back of head
- Failure to adequately defend any of the areas above
- Striking with any part of the sword other than the blade
- Using joint locks or other pain-compliance techniques in grappling
- Attacking with excessive force
- Striking the referee, a judge, a second, or any person outside the field

It is a common occurrence that an unsafe action by one fencer results in an unsafe action by the other. In such cases, the referee may issue a warning to either or both fencers at their discretion.

1.5.2 Dishonorable Behavior

Due to the proliferation of weapons at the event, it is critical that all participants maintain an atmosphere of decorum and mutual respect at all times. Warnings may be issued for any behavior that violates this fundamental expectation. Examples of behavior that may be issued a warning under this category include, but are not limited to:

- Refusal to salute your opponent
- Making derogatory statements or gestures
- Excessive displays of emotion
- Striking any inanimate object, such as the floor
- Striking any person without their consent

1.5.3 Tournament Interference

Warnings may be issued for any behavior that interferes with the fair and efficient running of the tournament. Examples of such behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Failing to follow the referee's instructions (including continuing to fence after break is called)
- Performing an action that is expressly forbidden by the tournament rules
- Attempting to influence the judges' decisions
- Undue delays in starting a match or exchange
- Distracting the fencers or any match officials while an exchange is in progress

2 Weapon-Specific Rules

2.1 Longsword

The tournament director for the longsword competition is Eric Sumner.

2.1.1 Equipment Requirements

Swords should be feder-style longsword simulators with a straight blade no longer than 110cm and a crossguard. They may also have a schilt formed into the blade.

Swords must not have any other protective features (nagel, knuckle bow, side ring, etc.).

2.1.2 Scoring Actions

- *Major strikes* (3 points) - Any strike to the mask, thrusts to the torso.
- *Minor strikes* (2 points) - Any other quality strike to a legal target.
- *Ancillary actions* (1 point) - One-handed strikes outside of a grapple. Other scoring actions specified in §1.4.

Strikes with the pommel or crossguard are forbidden, but may be indicated without contact for points (§1.4.3).

2.1.3 One-Handed Strikes

One-handed techniques are necessarily less controlled than two-handed ones. Fencers that employ such techniques should take special care of their targets to avoid warnings for unsafe fencing (§1.5.1).

2.2 Sidesword

The tournament director for the single rapier competition is Freyja Grétarsdóttir.

2.2.1 Equipment Requirements

Swords must be one-handed with a straight blade and a crossguard. Additional protective features, such as a knuckle bow or side ring, are acceptable. Blades should be 83-95cm in length, measured from guard to tip. Swords should weigh between 900g-1250g.

2.2.2 Scoring Actions

- *Major strikes* (3 points) - Any strike to the mask. Any thrust to the torso.
- *Minor strikes* (2 points) - Any other quality strike to a legal target, excluding hands.
- *Ancillary actions* (1 point) - Any strike to the hands. Other scoring actions specified in §1.4.

Closing the hand around a sword blade will be scored as a cut to the hand.

Strikes with the pommel or guard are forbidden, but may be indicated without contact for points (§1.4.3).

2.3 Saber

The tournament director for the sword and buckler competition is Hákon Klaus.

2.3.1 Equipment Requirements

Swords must be one-handed with a knuckle bow or cup as the primary protective feature. Blades should be 76-87cm in length, measured from guard to tip; curved blades measure along the straight line, not along the curve. Swords should weigh between 720-900g.

2.3.2 Scoring Actions

- *Major strikes* (3 points) - Any strike to the mask, thrusts to the torso.
- *Minor strikes* (2 points) - Any other quality strike to a legal target.
- *Ancillary actions* (1 point) - Other scoring actions specified in §1.4.

Strikes with the pommel or guard are forbidden, but may be indicated without contact for points (§1.4.3).